Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Please cancel Claims 1 through 3 and 28 through 39 without prejudice.

Please amend the remaining claims as follows:

Claims 1 through 3 (cancelled).

4. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 42 ~~3~~, wherein the product identifier comprises at least one of a product name, a serial number, a product lot number, and a patient identifier.

5. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 42 ~~3~~, further comprising a display coupled to the processor, and wherein the processor displays a mismatch notification on the display when the processor detects a mismatch between the product identifier read from the RFID tag of the removed medical product and the product identifier of the medical product authorized to be removed.

6. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the mismatch notification comprises the product identifier read from the RFID tag of the removed medical product and the product identifier of the medical product authorized to be removed.

7. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 42 ~~1~~, wherein the apparatus includes a single reader for reading the RFID tags of all medical products in the casing.

8. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 42 ~~1~~, wherein each drawer comprises a plurality of compartments, and wherein the reader comprises a plurality of readers for reading the RFID tags of medical products in respective compartments.

9. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 42 ~~1~~, further comprising an input device coupled to the processor for identifying a patient to be associated with one or more medical products being removed from the drawer.

10. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 42 ~~1~~, further comprising a return drawer for returning unused medical products, and a reader for reading an RFID tag of any returned medical product placed in the return drawer, the processor coupled to the reader for identifying the returned medical product.

11. (currently amended) A method for monitoring unit dose medical products stored in a medication-dispensing unit, each of the unit dose medical products comprising a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag uniquely associated therewith, the method comprising:

removing a unit dose medical product from the dispensing unit;

identifying the unit dose medical product removed from the dispensing unit by detecting removal of the RFID tag associated with the medical product removed from the dispensing unit;

verifying that the unit dose medical product removed from the dispensing unit is authorized to be removed from the dispensing unit, the verifying step comprising comparing a product name identified by the RFID tag removed from the dispensing unit with a product authorized to be removed from the dispensing unit; and

further comprising identifying a patient, and wherein the verifying step further comprises comparing a product name identified by the RFID tag removed from the dispensing unit with a list of medical products scheduled for delivery to the identified patient and assigning the removed unit dose medical product to an individual patent to ensure that the correct medical product is delivered to the patient.

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

14. (currently amended) A method for monitoring unit dose medical products stored in a medication-dispensing unit, each of the unit dose medical products comprising a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag uniquely associated therewith, the method comprising:

removing a unit dose medical product from the dispensing unit;

identifying the unit dose medical product removed from the dispensing unit by detecting removal of the RFID tag associated with the medical product removed from the dispensing unit, wherein the steps of identifying the medical product removed from the dispensing unit further comprises:

reading the RFID tags of the medical products in the dispensing unit before the medical product is removed from the dispensing unit;

reading the RFID tags of the medical products in the dispensing unit after the medical product is removed from the dispensing unit and assigning the unit dose medical products to respective individual patients to ensure that correct medical products are delivered to the patients; and

determining a difference between the readings of the RFID tags taken before and after the medical product is removed from the dispensing unit to identify the unit dose medical product removed.

15. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein the verifying step comprises comparing a product name identified by the RFID tag removed from the dispensing unit with a product name authorized to be removed from the dispensing unit.

16. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein the product name of the medical product removed from the dispensing unit is obtained by reading the RFID tags before the medical product is removed from the dispensing unit.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 14, further comprising identifying a patient, and wherein the verifying step further comprises comparing a product name identified by the RFID tag removed from the dispensing unit with a list of medical products scheduled for delivery to the identified patient.

18. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein the product name of the medical product removed from the dispensing unit is obtained by reading the RFID tags before the medical product is removed from the dispensing unit.

19. (original) The method of claim 11, further comprising:

returning a medical product to the dispensing unit; and

reading an RFID tag associated with the medical product to identify the returned medical product.

20. (original) The method of claim 19, further comprising determining an intended patient for the returned medical product, and sending a notice that the intended patient did not receive the returned medical product.

21. (currently amended) A method for monitoring removal of unit dose medical products stored in a medication-dispensing unit, each of the unit dose

medical products comprising a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag uniquely associated therewith, the method comprising:

reading the RFID tags of the unit dose medical products in the dispensing unit before removing one or more medical products from the dispensing unit;

removing one or more unit dose medical products from the dispensing unit;

reading the RFID tags of the medical products in the dispensing unit after the one or more medical products are removed from the dispensing unit; and

determining a difference between the readings of the RFID tags taken before and after the one or more medical products are removed from the dispensing unit to identify the one or more unit dose medical products removed from the dispensing unit, and assigning the unit dose medical products to respective individual patients to ensure that correct medical products are delivered to the patients.

22. (original) The method of claim 21, further comprising verifying that the one or more medical products removed from the dispensing unit are authorized to be removed from the dispensing unit.

23. (original) The method of claim 22, wherein the verifying step comprises comparing a product name identified by an RFID tag removed from the dispensing unit with a product name authorized to be removed from the dispensing unit.

24. (previously amended) The method of claim 22, further comprising identifying a patient, and wherein the verifying step further comprises comparing a product name identified by the RFID tag removed from the dispensing unit with a list of medical products scheduled for delivery to the identified patient.

25. (original) The method of claim 21, further comprising transmitting an inventory notice from the dispensing unit when a quantity of RFID tags stored within the dispensing unit falls below a threshold.

26. (original) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

returning a medical product to the dispensing unit;

reading the RFID tags of the medical products in the dispensing unit after the medical product is returned to the dispensing unit; and

determining a difference between the readings of the RFID tags taken before and after the medical products are returned to the dispensing unit to identify the medical product returned to the dispensing unit.

27. (currently amended) The method of claim 26, further comprising determining an intended patient for the returned medical product, and ~~unassigning this medical product from~~ sending a notice that the intended patient did not receive the returned medical product.

Claim 28 through 39 – Cancelled.

40. (previously presented) A method for monitoring unit dose medical products as in claim 11 wherein the unit dose medical products are medication containers each comprising one of a vial, bottle or bag.

41. (currently amended) A method for monitoring unit dose medical products as in claim 14 wherein the unit dose medical product removed from the dispensing unit is assigned to an individual patient upon ~~after~~ removal from the dispensing unit.

Please add new claims 42 through 44:

42. (new) An apparatus for tracking unit dose medical products, each of the unit dose medical products having a radio frequency identification (RFID) tag uniquely associated therewith, the apparatus comprising

a casing comprising a plurality of lockable drawers for receiving one or more unit dose medical products therein,

a reader for reading the RFID tags associated with the unit dose medical products in the drawers,

a processor coupled to the reader for receiving and processing readings of the RFID tags in the drawer to identify medical products in the drawer,

wherein the processor can verify that a unit dose medical product removed from a drawer is authorized to be removed and the removed medical product is assigned to an individual patient as the medical product is removed, and

wherein the processor can identify a medical product removed from a drawer by determining a difference between readings of RFID tags in the drawer taken before and after a medical product is removed.

43. (new) A method for monitoring removal of unit does medical products stored in a medication-dispensing unit, each of the unit dose medical products comprising a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag uniquely associated therewith, the method comprising:

reading the RFID tags of the unit dose medical products in the dispensing unit before removing one or more medical products from the dispensing unit;

removing one or more unit dose medical products from the dispensing unit;

reading the RFID tags of the medical products in the dispensing unit after the one or more medical products are removed from the dispensing unit;

determining a difference between the readings of the RFID tags taken before and after the one or more medical products are moved from the dispensing unit to identify the one or more unit dose medical products removed from the dispensing unit,

returning a unit dose medical product to the dispensing unit;

reading the RFID tags of the medical products in the dispensing unit after the medical product is returned to the dispensing unit; and

determining a difference between the readings of the RFID tags taken before and after the medical products are returned to the dispensing unit to identify the medical product returned to the dispensing unit.

44. (new) The method of claim 43 further comprising determining an intended patient for the returned medical product, and sending a notice that the intended patient did not receive the returned medical product.

(45) (new) The method of claim 43 wherein a returned medical product cannot be removed from the dispensing unit without gaining authorization to override a lock and open the unit for removal.